

MEDIA ADVISORY

Patterson: Desal key to Texas water supply future

Land Commissioner to share vision at Groundwater Summit

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
August 27, 2013

Contact: Andy Hogue
512-463-9212
andy.hogue@glo.texas.gov

SAN MARCOS —

This year's Texas Groundwater Summit will be held not far from where the Texas General Land Office launched a major effort to convert brackish water to drinkable water last year.

Texas Land Commissioner Jerry Patterson will keynote the Thursday morning session of the Texas Groundwater Summit at 9:30 a.m., Thursday, Aug. 29, at the Embassy Suites San Marcos Conference Center, 1001 E. McCarty Lane and Interstate 35, in San Marcos.

Patterson and General Land Office staff members conducted research last year on the possibility of converting salty groundwater deep within a 2,000-acre tract of state-held land between San Marcos and New Braunfels into fresh water fit for human consumption. The GLO is still evaluating possible sites within the region and around Texas for future desalination (or "desal") operations, including a \$2 million study on the Texas coast.

Patterson said the more efficient and cost-effective desalination technology becomes, the greater the savings will be for future Texans facing a dwindling fresh water supply.

"We can't rely on the Edwards Aquifer for all our future groundwater needs," Patterson said. "It takes three decades to get a new lake permitted and filled, and pipelines are costly. We'll need more alternatives such as desalination to provide a solution for our thirsty, growing population."

Patterson will be joined by state Sen. Troy Fraser (R-Horseshoe Bay), the Chairman of the Texas Senate Committee on Natural Resources, to discuss permanent and drought-resistant solutions for the booming state. Currently, 80 percent of the public water supply comes from groundwater sources. Texas' population is expected to double in the next 50 years; and with greater restrictions on the construction of surface reservoirs, traditional water supply sources are projected to shrink by 10 percent. Meanwhile, 2011 was the driest year on record for Texas, and reservoirs are at 61 percent of capacity statewide. Texas currently has 17 desal facilities that put out over 1 million gallons per day.

Hosted by the Texas Alliance of Groundwater Conservation Districts, the Texas Groundwater Summit will include presentations from experts and exhibitors in many areas of groundwater management. The conference is slated to address updates from the 83rd legislative session and local Groundwater Conservation Districts and researchers.

For more information on the Texas Groundwater Summit, visit: <http://www.texasgroundwater.org/news-events/texas-groundwater-summit.html>.

WHO: Texas Land Commissioner Jerry Patterson

WHAT: 2013 Texas Groundwater Summit

WHERE: Embassy Suites San Marcos Conference Center, in San Marcos

WHEN: 9:30 a.m., Thursday, Aug. 29

WHY: To address future strategies for groundwater conservation

—30—